

Pyrus Park, 7 Vears Road, Ashburton Statement of Significance, December 2021

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| Heritage Place: | Pyrus Park, 7 Vears Road, Ashburton | PS ref no: | HO926 |
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What is significant?

Pyrus Park at 7 Vears Road, Ashburton, is significant. The house was constructed in two stages, with an original timber house of c1885 facing Vears Road, and a later brick front wing of c1899-1901 facing High Street. It is set behind a large front garden with mature trees (reduced in size somewhat from its original High Street boundary).

The house is significant to the extent of its c1885 and c1899-1901 fabric. Later additions, outbuildings, and the carport are not significant.

How is it significant?

Pyrus Park is of local historical significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Pyrus Park is historically significant as a tangible illustration of Ashburton's agricultural past, as it was an orcharding house from the 1880s to the 1930s. Agricultural pursuits were the first type of development in Ashburton (and the former Burwood), predating suburban development that began only in the late 1880s when the Outer Circle Line was announced. The house was first owned by Samuel Jenkin, a gardener, with the initial house built as early as 1885, when Jenkins was rated for a timber house. From 1885 or earlier it was occupied by his brother, William Henry Jenkin, a fruit grower, and then transferred to William in 1889. The house was expanded with a more substantial brick front wing shortly after 1899, around the time ownership transferred to the Catanach family. They were prominent jewellers with stores in Melbourne, and their occupation illustrates the transition of the area to well-heeled suburban living. From 1913 to 1932, botanist

and agriculturalist William Dickson Wilson had a pear and apricot orchard here, reflected by the name 'Pyrus Park'. The two phases of the house illustrate the change from a modest farmhouse (the timber wing) to the more substantial brick front wing with its asymmetrical Italianate form and decorative details seen in the more developed western suburbs of Boroondara. (Criterion A)

Pyrus Park is one of only four Victorian-era houses identified in Ashburton, its c1885 wing is the earliest of the four, and overall it is one of the two most intact. It is a rare surviving place demonstrating the early development of this suburb. (Criterion B)

Primary source

City of Boroondara Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 8: Ashburton (Context Pty Ltd, December 2021)

This document is an incorporated document in the Boroondara Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*